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**SELECT BOARD
Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2021**

A meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman, Peter Carlson. In attendance were: Chairman, Peter Carlson, Vice Chairman, Colleen Roy, Clerk, Mathew Often, Ray Mead, and Doreen DeFazio. Staff in attendance: Town Administrator, Evan Brassard and Management Analyst and Communication Specialist, William Blake.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Carlson read announcements regarding the Recreation Department, Boy Scouts bottle drive, and Shop Grafton

PUBLIC COMMENTS

SCHEDULE

Public Hearing – National Grid Pole Petition – Murray Avenue

Mr. Often read the Legal Notice into the record.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead the board vote to open the public hearing for the Murray Avenue Pole Petition. Motion passed 5-0.

Kim Tavallaimola of National Grid attended via zoom. She provided information on why the pole needs to be relocated. She does not know that timeframe of when the work will be done. Scott Sowden joined the meeting. He is the engineer on the job. He stated once the petition hearing is complete, the work will start.

Mr. Carlson asked that National Grid communicate to the town when the work will begin so he can alert the residents. Ms. Tavallaimola stated she would contact the Town Administrator tomorrow.

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There were no further questions.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to close the public hearing for the Murray Avenue Pole Petition. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio the board vote to approve the Pole Petition as presented for Murray Avenue. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Hearing – National Grid Pole Petition – Main Street

Mr. Often read the Legal Notice into the record.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio the board vote to open the public hearing for the Main Street Pole Petition. Motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Tavallaimola of National Grid confirmed this work is similar to the Murray Avenue work.

There were no questions from the Board or the public.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead the board vote to close the public hearing for the Main Street Pole Petition. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to approve the Pole Petition as presented for Main Street. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Hearing – National Grid Pole Petition – Messier Street

Mr. Often read the Legal Notice into the record.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to open the public hearing for the Messier Street Pole Petition. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Snowden of National Grid confirmed this work is similar to the Murray Avenue and Main Street work.

There were no questions from the Board or public.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to close the public hearing for the Messier Street Pole Petition. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to approve the Pole Petition as presented for Messier Street. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Hearing – Fiscal Year 2022 Tax Classification

Mr. Often read the Legal Notice into the record.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to open the Fiscal Year 2022 Tax Classification Public Hearing. Motion passed 5-0.

Principal Assessor Mary Oliver reviewed the FY22 Tax Classification with the Board. See the attached presentation. She reviewed the four votes the Select Board will be considering. Ms. Oliver reviewed how the tax rate is established each year and reviewed the tax levy limit with the Select Board. She reviewed the new growth by class indicating that most came from residential. This is due to the new construction that has occurred in the past 18 months.

Ms. Oliver stated there is an increase of 6.32% in the assessed value of properties over last year. She stated given how sales are going, there could be an 8% increase next year. She provided slides on assessed values by class and historically.

The tax rate will be \$16.88 per thousand. This will result in about a 3.66% increase from last year's taxes.

She then reviewed in more detail the four votes the Select Board will be considering and the historical motions.

Mr. Often stated this information (excess levy capacity) needs to be used to identify when the next override may need to occur. He stated the Select Board should be using the information to track the longevity of the current override. It needs to be discussed every year.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to close the Fiscal Year 2022 Tax Classification Public Hearing. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the board vote to adopt a residential Factor of 1.0 No Open Space Discount, No Residential Exemption, No Small Commercial Exemption and give authorization to the Principal Assessor to electronically sign and submit the LA-5 to the DOR. Motion passed 5-0.

Grafton Common Improvements Contract Change Orders

This item will be passed over and taken up at the November 16, 2021 meeting.

One Day Beer and Wine Licenses – Community Harvest Project and VFW

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio the Board vote to grant a one-day beer and wine license to the Community Harvest Project on November 7, 2021 and a one-day beer and wine license to the Veterans of Foreign Wars on November 14, 2021. Motion passed 5-0.

Salt Contracts

Mr. Brassard stated issues around shipping have resulted in an increase in the price of salt.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. Roy the Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign the Morton Salt, Inc. contract as the primary salt supplier for the Town of Grafton in FY22 at the cost of \$62.20 per ton. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead the Board vote to authorize the Chairman to sign the Eastern Minerals, Inc. contract as the secondary salt supplier for the Town of Grafton in FY22 at the cost of \$64.50 per ton. Motion passed 5-0.

RESIGNATIONS

Assistant to the Select Board

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio the Board vote to accept the resignation of the Select Board Assistant effective November 5, 2021. The Board thanked Ms. Duncan. Motion passed 5-0.

APPOINTMENTS/SELECT BOARD

Affordable Housing Trust

Stratos Bonos was not in attendance.

Elizabeth Coveney joined by zoom. She introduced herself to the Board and provided information on her background, personal and professional and why she is seeking this position. Ms. Roy asked is she was familiar with the Worcester Street project and for her opinion on the project. Ms. Coveney stated she is familiar; she attended the listening session and was happy to see there is a pause in the project to allow for more research. Mr. Often asked how she balances her passion for open space and affordable housing. She stated the focus is on the master plan; they must be equally accessed. Ms. DeFazio asked what her personal vision is in sitting on the Trust. Ms. Coveney discussed her work with the foster care system and why she sees this Trust as important. She emphasized her open mindedness and her focus on collaboration when she lives so close to the Worcester Street project.

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Mr. Mead asked if she would need to recuse herself from the votes since she is a direct abutter to the 25 Worcester Street property. He added this is not the only affordable housing property. It is a similar situation to members of the planning board having to recuse themselves. Ms. Coveney stated there are other affordable sites being considered. She wondered if there were other conflicts on the Trust. Ms. Roy stated 25 Worcester Street is the only property the Trust owns right now.

Mr. Brassard reviewed the difference between the perceived conflict of interest and the conflict of interest as it pertains to Mass General Law. He is not certain if this could be mitigated by a disclosure. Mr. Carlson mentioned the attorney of the day as a resource to reach out to if someone has a potential conflict.

Ms. Coveney stated she does not want this to be a distraction, she does want to serve the town and she is dedicated to affordable housing.

Lakisha Carpenter Papoutsakis attended via zoom. Mr. Carlson stated he knows the Board has interviewed her for this position before. She provided information on her background including the other housing boards she has served on before.

Ms. DeFazio asked what her overall vision is for the Trust and how she would collaborate with other members. There were no other questions from the Board.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Mr. Mead the Board vote to appoint Lakisha Carpenter Papoutsakis to the Affordable Housing Trust for a term to expire on June 30, 2023. Motion passed 5-0.

Election Worker

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio the Board appoint Brian Langevin as an election worker with a term to expire on June 30, 2022. Motion passed 5-0.

SELECT BOARD REPORTS

Mr. Carlson stated he attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at M.J.s Market.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Brassard stated as of November 15th See Click Fix will no longer be used given the cost per use. A press release will go out on other ways issues can be reported to the town.

Work has begun on George Hill Road.

The budget process is beginning using ClearGov and the initial budget will be started next week with the Department Heads. End of December will be final budget submission deadline.

The punch list is almost complete at the library and the landscape is almost done.

The Common Restoration is waiting on the change orders for the Band Stand and Mr. Brassard reviewed the claim process due to the car driving onto the Common. Ms. DeFazio asked if the Traffic Safety Committee could review what is happening traffic wise around the Common. The Board discussed whether or not there need to be lights at the Common and/or some sort of barrier to slow people down. Mr. Brassard stated he would reach out to Chief Crepaeu.

Mr. Brassard discussed the Energy Choice Program and highlighted the savings.

He highlighted the earmarks in the budget. One is for a Harley in the Police Department and the other for a customer service window in the Building Department.

Mr. Brassard highlighted the work done by Barb Connelly in the Senior Center and the Senior Tax Work Off Program.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Carlson highlighted correspondence from Mr. Prisby and asked if the Board would like to discuss it or take any action. Ms. Roy and Mr. Often stated they were both bothered by this email. Ms. Roy stated one of the four pillars of CPC is affordable housing. Mr. Often stated the letter clearly stated he was sending it as a resident and not as an official town entity. He added this is a slippery slope with regard to freedom of speech. The Board discussed the need to determine how they intend to react to these things going forward. The Board agreed it would make sense for one of the members to speak to Mr. Stephens. Ms. Roy stated she would like for someone to speak with the Historic District to determine how they felt about this email. Mr. Brassard stated the person should be invited in rather than having a member of the Board go and speak with him. Mr. Often is not in favor of this. Mr. Mead and Ms. DeFazio agreed. Mr. Carlson stated he would like for him to come in. Ms. Roy stated it is too late to leave it alone. The Board will invite Mr. Stephens to come to the November 16th meeting. The Board did not take any public comment.

Mr. Carlson highlighted the remaining correspondence. Mr. Often stated he is not in favor of the school choice proclamation.

Mr. Mead would like the Fire Chief Search Correspondence to be included in the meeting packet next week.

DISCUSSION

Review of Annual Music License Application

This item will be passed over.

Fire Department Meeting Update

The Select Board will be meeting with the Fire Department personnel on November 9th at 6:00pm. Mr. Mead indicated he would like an item on the November 16th agenda pertaining to the fire chief search as well. Ms. Roy stated Chief Gauthier is no longer going to file for an extension of his retirement with the state. The Board discussed the items they would like to discuss at the November 9th meeting.

November 9th Goals Workshop

Ms. DeFazio stated she and Mr. Brassard had a preliminary discussion about who to structure the goals discussion next week. Ms. Roy likes the two-part approach. Ms. DeFazio and Mr. Brassard will finalize the approach later this week.

MEETING MINUTES

October 13, 14, 18, 19, 2021

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio the Board vote to accept the meeting minutes of October 13, October 14, October 18, and October 19, 2021 as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Ms. DeFazio to adjourn the meeting at 9:08pm. The motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Joann Duncan
Assistant to the Select Board

A video of the entire meeting can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Hs-WD_qjZs

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